

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~striketrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

1. (previously presented) An estimated price providing apparatus for an automobile comprising:

a first database in which an automobile manufacturer's suggested retail prices are registered in advance for respective predetermined automobile specifications that the automobile manufacturer can supply;

at least one second database that includes an automobile dealer's estimated prices that are registered in advance for automobile specifications corresponding to said respective predetermined automobile specifications;

customize means for allowing a user of an information terminal connected to said estimated price providing apparatus via a communication line to select an automobile of desired specifications in accordance with the respective predetermined automobile specifications by operations from the information terminal;

first price providing means for referring to said first database and transmitting the manufacturer's suggested retail price for an automobile of desired specifications selected by said customize means to the information terminal;

dealer select means for allowing the user to select the automobile dealer by operations from the information terminal after said first price providing means transmits the manufacturer's suggested retail price; and

second price providing means for transmitting an estimated price of the automobile dealer selected by said dealer select means for the automobile of desired specifications when the automobile dealer is selected by said dealer select means and transmitting the desired specifications selected by said customize means to the information terminal in a name for the automobile dealer selected by said dealer select means.

2. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said second price providing means provides the estimated price via e-mail of which e-mail address of its sender is the automobile dealer selected by said dealer select means.

3-7. (Canceled)

8. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising: means for providing all estimated prices of the automobile of desired specifications, which were previously provided to the user, to be able to be displayed as a list on the information terminal in response to a query request by the user at the information terminal.

9. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising: means for transferring an estimation request of a trade-in automobile to the automobile dealer selected by said dealer select means when the estimation request of the trade-in automobile is received from the user of the information terminal .

10. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising: estimated price updated means for permitting to update the automobile dealer's estimated prices of said at least one second database in response to a request from the automobile dealer corresponding to said at least one second database, and denying update of said at least one second database by another automobile dealer that does not correspond to said at least one second database.

11. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising: means for permitting browsing of the automobile dealer's estimated prices of said at least one second database in response to a request from the automobile dealer corresponding to said at least one second database, and denying browsing and changing of the dealer's estimated prices of said at least one second database by another automobile dealer that does not correspond to said at least one second database.

12. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said estimated price update means denies update of storage contents of the automobile dealer's estimated prices of said at least one second database by the automobile manufacturer.

13. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the predetermined choices that are set in advance are restricted to customize a backbone that determines drive performance of the automobile as a first step, and are also restricted to select other specifications to have specifications selected in the first step as top priority in subsequent steps when the user of the information terminal customizes an automobile with desired specifications by said customize means.

14. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said customize means executes a selection of drive system components that form a backbone of the automobile which can be manufactured by the automobile manufacturer, and then said customize means executes a selection of wheel peripheral components registered in advance in correspondence with the selected drive system components.

15-21. (Canceled)

22. (previously presented) An estimated price providing method for an automobile using an estimated price providing apparatus comprising a first database in which an automobile manufacturer's suggested retail prices are registered in advance for respective predetermined automobile specifications that the automobile manufacturer can supply and at least one second database that includes an automobile dealer's estimated prices are registered in advance for automobile specifications corresponding to said respective predetermined automobile specifications, said method comprising:

allowing a user of an information terminal that is connected to the estimated price providing apparatus via a communication line to select an automobile of desired specifications in accordance with predetermined choices by operations from the information terminal;

transmitting the automobile manufacturer's suggested retail price for the selected automobile of desired specifications from the first data base to the information terminal;

allowing the user to select an automobile dealer by operations from the information terminal after the automobile manufacturer's suggested retail price is transmitted; and

transmitting an estimated price of the selected automobile dealer for the automobile of desired specifications and the desired specifications, when the automobile dealer is selected, to the information terminal in a name for the selected automobile dealer.

23. (previously presented) A computer program instructing a computer to operate as an estimated price providing apparatus for an automobile comprising:

a first database in which an automobile manufacturer's suggested retail prices are registered in advance for respective predetermined automobile specifications that the automobile manufacturer can supply;

at least one second database that includes an automobile dealer's estimated prices that are registered in advance for automobile specifications corresponding to said respective predetermined automobile specifications;

customize means for allowing a user of an information terminal connected to said estimated price providing apparatus via a communication line to select an automobile of desired specifications in accordance with the respective predetermined automobile specifications by operations from the information terminal;

first price providing means for referring to said first database and transmitting the manufacturer's suggested retail price for an automobile of desired specifications selected by said customize means to the information terminal;

dealer select means for allowing the user to select an automobile dealer by operations from the information terminal after said first price providing means transmits the manufacturer's suggested retail price; and

second price providing means for transmitting an estimated price of the automobile dealer selected by said dealer select means for the automobile of desired specifications when the automobile dealer is selected by said dealer select means and transmitting the desired specifications selected by said customize means to the information terminal in a name for the automobile dealer selected by said dealer select means.

24. (Canceled)

25. (previously presented) A computer readable storage medium storing a program code which makes a computer operate as an estimated price providing apparatus for an automobile comprising:

a first database in which an automobile manufacturer's suggested retail prices are registered in advance for respective predetermined automobile specifications that the automobile manufacturer can supply;

at least one second database that includes an automobile dealer's estimated prices that are registered in advance for automobile specifications corresponding to said respective predetermined automobile specifications;

customize means for allowing a user of an information terminal connected to said estimated price providing apparatus via a communication line to select an automobile of desired specifications in accordance with the respective predetermined automobile specifications by operations from the information terminal;

first price providing means for referring to said first database and transmitting the manufacturer's suggested retail price for an automobile of desired specifications selected by said customize means to the information terminal;

dealer select means for allowing the user to select an automobile dealer by operations from the information terminal after said first price providing means transmits the manufacturer's suggested retail price; and

second price providing means for transmitting an estimated price of the automobile dealer selected by said dealer select means for the automobile of desired specifications when the automobile dealer is selected by said dealer select means and transmitting the desired specifications selected by said customize means to the information terminal in a name for the automobile dealer selected by said dealer select means.

26. (new) A method of providing automobile price estimates comprising:

registering an automobile manufacturer's suggested retail prices for predetermined automobile specifications that the automobile manufacturer can supply in a first database;

registering an automobile dealer's estimated prices for automobile specifications corresponding to said predetermined automobile specifications in a second database;

allowing a user to select an automobile of desired specifications from an information terminal;

transmitting the automobile manufacturer's suggested retail price for the selected automobile from the first database to the information terminal;

allowing the user to select an automobile dealer from the information terminal after the automobile manufacturer's suggested retail price is transmitted; and

transmitting an estimated price of the selected automobile dealer for the automobile of desired specifications and the desired specifications from the second database to the information terminal.